

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47), Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Vietnam, today issued the following statement in honor of International Human Rights Day:

"On December tenth of each year, we commemorate the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the first global recognition - and celebration - of human rights. But while human rights have been expanded in many parts of the world, far too many people continue to be deprived of their basic civil, political, and religious liberties.

"This is especially true in Vietnam, where the government harasses and imprisons those who protest their lack of rights. But despite the government's repeated attempts to silence its citizens, dissidents continue to risk their lives and their livelihoods to call attention to their plight. No doubt, these brave men and women deserve to be praised for speaking out against Vietnam's oppressive regime. But a better way to honor their courageous actions would be to listen to - and act on - their cries for justice.

"Earlier today, I had the honor of meeting Thuy Tien, the daughter of detained Vietnamese activist Tran Khai Thanh Thuy. After expressing her support for pro-democracy activists, Thuy Tien's mother was beaten and arrested by Vietnamese officials. Mrs. Thuy has diabetes and tuberculosis and is not receiving the medical care she needs in prison.

"I hope her story - and the many others like it - will finally inspire the U.S. and international communities to take Vietnam's human rights abuses seriously. America has always been a beacon of freedom and democracy to nations around the world. Today, we must rededicate ourselves to protecting and promoting those values wherever they are threatened, including Vietnam."

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